293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, theproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engra- [325] ved verses. The method of casting is the"cire perdue", which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "ma- [534] qomya" crutch. In front of old churches, resonant stones are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänassel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, [177] which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Buddleia, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka 436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka. 435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by [316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains, that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and [325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abyssinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces 436 make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

436 Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which 804 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six rotol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In the genre known as *qenē*, the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā warq* poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on religious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is sometimes rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* figure:

Ețsa balas balto addām ķanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.